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THE

MEMORIAL

OF

THE PROPRIETORS

OF THE

NEW SOUTH MEETING-HOUSE IN DORCHESTER,

TO THE

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MINISTERS OF THE BOSTON ASSOCIATION.

TOGETHER WITH THEIR REPORT ON THE SAME.

By Lemuel Capen. A.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY WATSON & BANGS, No. 7, STATE STREET.
1813.

Fr. 6341.11
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Dec. 15, 1869
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To the Rev. Gentlemen composing the Boston Association of Ministers.

A MEMORIAL.

AS your memorialists are about to form a third religious society in the town of Dorchester, having erected a house for the public worship of God; and being desirous, in all our religious concerns, to conform to the general usage and customs of congregational societies, and especially to the long established usage and customs of the original society in this town, and those more particularly connected with it;

We would, therefore, solicit your advice, direction and assistance, in every thing relating to the regular establishment of a third Church and religious Society in this place. And as we deem it necessary on all similar occasions, we wish to make known to your Association the reasons and motives by which we have been influenced. More especially as, in our case, the reasons originated in a most unhappy and long continued controversy with the pastor of the second church and society.

And though this controversy terminated in our separation from the Rev. Mr. Codman, by the mutual consent of all the parties concerned, and peace is again restored among us; and though we could wish, on every account, that this unfortunate contest might be forgotten; yet, since many insinuations, and direct accusations, highly injurious to our characters, both as men and Christians, have been published and circulated in various ways, we deem it indispensably necessary to attempt a

removal of the stigma thus inflicted, before we presume to recommend ourselves again to the notice of Christian societies ; and not to acknowledge, by our silence, that we deserve the character, that has so frequently been bestowed upon us.

This we do the more cheerfully attempt, because we feel the strongest confidence, that our conduct in this affair has been, *generally*, consistent with what were "*the sentiments, wishes, and requests,**" not only of ourselves, but of those who now vindicate the conduct of the Rev. Mr. Codman, at the time when we formed the society of which he is the pastor, and at the time of his ordination. We say our conduct *generally*, because we are far from thinking it impossible, that individuals among us may have committed some errors and imprudences. For it would naturally be expected, that in an affair of this kind, much party feeling must be excited ; and that many things would be said and done, by individuals, on both sides, which they, in their more cool and tranquil moments, would condemn, and which the deliberate judgment of no one could approve. The idea we wish here to convey is, that the principles, for which we have unitedly and uniformly been contending, were unanimously considered essential in the establishment of the second society.

Whatever may be the opinion of those who have been witnesses to this unhappy affair, and especially of those who have been near spectators of it, we can, with the most perfect sincerity, assure your association, that it has never been our intention to violate ecclesiastical and religious order, nor to deviate, in any way, from the principles on which the second society was founded. But on the contrary, it has invariably been our desire, and our sole object, through the whole of the contest, to continue and promote that "*harmony and friendly intercourse, which have, for many years, subsisted among the churches in this neighborhood, as well as among their respective pastors.*†" And should your Association be pleased to grant us your assistance, as to the

* See Note 1. † See Note 4.

object of this memorial, we do furthermore assure you, that we "*will not be wanting in our disposition and endeavors, that peace and friendship may continue and abound.*"

As the merits of the principal question, in our dispute with the Rev. Mr. Codman, depend very much upon the previous transactions of his society; and as, in our opinion, it is necessary for "all who wish to obtain correct information on the subject," to have a knowledge of all the important events and attendant circumstances, which materially affect it, as well those which took place before our acquaintance with the Rev. Mr. Codman, as those "relating to the agreement made with him previous to his ordination, and the proceedings which have since taken place;"* we shall, therefore, refer for the truth of some of our statements, to the printed documents, relating to the establishment of the second church and society.

Those documents, together with the collection of papers published by Mr. Codman's church, immediately before the sitting of the second council, we shall make the basis of our defence. By these means, we hope to give a clear and impartial statement of facts, and to present a regular and connected view of the whole subject.

As it respects the history of the second society, previous to its acquaintance with the Rev. Mr. Codman, it is abundantly evident from the most respectable authorities, that its establishment originated in no dislike to the former minister, nor any dissention among the members of the original society. Those who formed the new society always expressed the most perfect satisfaction with every part of the Rev. Mr. Harris' ministerial conduct, and the deepest regret at separating from him, and their friends of his society.† The measure was absolutely necessary from the increased population of the town, and the remoteness of many of the inhabitants from the place of worship. All its religious concerns were managed with "*wonderful zeal, unanimity and success,*"‡—with the most commendable "*decency and propriety, order*

* Collection of papers, page 2. † See Notes 1 & 2. ‡ See Note 3.

and charity."* Through the whole transactions of building a second meeting-house, "*of gathering a new church and forming a second society,*" and of settling a minister; (either of which circumstances separately has often been the subject of the most serious difficulties, the source of incalculable mischief in religious communities,) "*a Christian spirit of love and harmony was evinced.*"†

Till after the ordination of the Rev. Mr. Codman, no more disagreement seemed to exist, than if there had been but one mind to plan, but one will to direct, and one hand to execute. But a few months after his ordination, an increasing "*uneasiness and dissatisfaction*" existed, which threatened the destruction of that once peaceful and happy community; the alleged cause of which was, that "*he had not generally and indiscriminately made his exchanges, with those ministers, who preach the public lectures in Boston, on Thursdays,*"‡ and compose the Boston Association, of which he was a member, fromwhom he received ordination; and with whose societies his society was in the strictest harmony and fellowship.

That the Rev. Mr. Codman instituted a new mode of ministerial conduct respecting exchanges, is universally admitted. The only plea, that he and his friends have ever made, is, "that such conduct was to be expected, from his communication previous to his ordination." This, then, is the principal cause of complaint. Others, it is true, have since arisen; but it is very evident, from the whole history of the controversy, that the primary cause of complaint is *that* respecting his ministerial exchanges.

The grand question in dispute, therefore, and the point on which all our reasonings upon this subject must be made to bear, is,

WHETHER THOSE WHO WERE DISSATISFIED WITH THE REV. MR. CODMAN, HAD ANY, AND IF ANY, WHAT REASONS, PREVIOUS TO HIS BEING SETTLED AS THEIR MINISTER, TO EXPECT FROM HIM A DIFFERENT MODE OF MINISTERIAL CONDUCT, RESPECTING EXCHANGES, FROM WHAT HE ADOPTED AND PURSUED.

* See Note 4. † See Note 5. ‡ See Note 11.

There are two sources, from which they might, more especially, derive reasons to expect a different conduct.

1. The customs and usage of the parish, or the way, in which they had always been accustomed to have that part of ministerial duty performed, might be such as to lead them to expect, as a matter of course, that he would comply with such customs and usage, and not institute a different system.

2. They might be led to expect it from his previous intimations, and the terms of the contract.

1. With regard to the mode of ministerial exchanges, to which those composing the second parish in Dorchester had been accustomed, it is a fact which cannot be disputed, that they had been accustomed to hear, '*generally and indiscriminately those ministers who compose the Boston Association, and preach the public lectures on Thursdays.*' That is, the Rev. Mr. Harris, having been, for many years, a member of that Association, has commonly made his exchanges with them, without any particular regard to "*the distinctions of sect and party.*" If we go farther, we find that the practice of his predecessors, in this respect, was similar to his, so far back at least, as the knowledge of the present generation extends. It appears also, from the original communication of the proprietors of the second meeting-house, to the town, and also from the farewell address of the second church to the first, that the second church and society unanimously and perfectly approved of every part of the Rev. Mr. Harris' ministerial conduct.* It is furthermore evident from the proceedings of the second society, after their separation, that it was their unanimous wish to have ministerial duties performed among them, precisely in the manner to which they had been accustomed when under the care of the Rev. Mr. Harris. For the church invited him, with four other clergymen, as nearly connected as any with him and his society, and all of them members of the Boston Association, to compose a council to recognize and declare them a regular church.† Let it also be particularly observed, that the

* See Note 1 & 2. † See Note 6.

second church, on that occasion, most sacredly pledged themselves to the council, to maintain communion with them, and the churches they represented, "in all those ways in which distinct churches may have useful intercourse and fellowship with one another;" and likewise to endeavor to continue "the harmony and friendly intercourse that had subsisted for many years among the churches in the neighborhood, and among their respective pastors."* And finally, though the Rev. Mr. Codman had a voice with his church in the selection of the council for his ordination, nine of them, out of twelve, were members of the Boston Association.†

Consenting to take the charge of a society under these circumstances, it would naturally be expected, that the Rev. Mr. Codman would conform to their customs and usage; and he would have great reason to expect complaints if he deviated, in any considerable degree, from them.

But if, previous to his ordination, he gave the society any reason to suppose he intended to institute a new system of ministerial conduct, and they assented to it, all reasoning from this source, and indeed from every other source, to prove the claims of those who were dissatisfied with him, will be of no avail.

This he contends he did. It is repeatedly argued in his defence, that he "gave the church and society a *full and particular* statement of his views and belief respecting the doctrines of the gospel, previous to his acceptance of their call to be their minister;"‡ that he "did not return an affirmative answer to their request till after a *full and explicit* communication of his religious sentiments;"§ that "his church were acquainted with his sentiments before his ordination;‖" that "before his settlement, he stated *most fairly and distinctly*, the doctrines which he intended to preach, and the manner in which he intended to discharge his ministerial duty," and that his society "knew what to expect from him in this important concern."¶ This he says he did, "to prevent future difficulties, or any misunderstanding between them."

* See Note 4. † See Note 7. ‡ Collection of papers, page 49. § Ibidem, p. 73
‖ Ibidem p. 79. ¶ Ibidem, p. 116.

He complains most severely that he should experience any difficulty "on account of any line of conduct which he conceived to be consistent with those sentiments."*

Here we would again observe, that this is the only plea, that either Mr. Codman, or his friends, have ever offered, to justify his conduct respecting exchanges.

They have never pretended, that he gave the least intimation of his intention to introduce innovations, in any branch of ministerial duty, except what is contained in the declaration of his sentiments.

Now if we can make it appear, that his declaration was not sufficient to convince the society of his intention, the question will be at rest.

We will, therefore, analyze and examine his declaration. It has been called "*full and explicit*," "*full and particular;*" the doctrines he intended to preach are said to be "*stated most fairly and distinctly.*"

In the first place, Mr. Codman says, he thinks it his duty to declare his "firm, unshaken faith in those doctrines, that are sometimes called the doctrines of the reformation,—the doctrines of the cross,—the peculiar doctrines of the gospel."† Instead of being "*particular*," "*explicit*," or "*distinct*," we can scarcely conceive of any thing more general. What kind of a protestant must he be, who does not believe in the doctrines of the reformation? And under what denomination of christians must he be ranked who does not hope to *live and die* in the faith of the "doctrines of the cross,—the peculiar doctrines of the gospel?"

He next tells us that he "*believes* his faith is the same with that of our venerable forefathers," and designates by name four of the former ministers of Dorchester. With regard to our forefathers, we never understood that they precisely agreed in their religious faith; and as to those of them who were ministers of Dorchester, though we never knew exactly what were the distinct articles of their *faith*, yet we *believe*, for we have always understood it concerning them, that their *conduct* was very different from what Mr. Codman has adopted among us. Next

* Collection of papers, page 49. † See Note 8.

we are told, that "Arian and Socinian errors had, of late years, crept into some of our churches," but he points out no particular churches, and that "he believes the Father, Son and Holy Ghost to be the one living and true God;" and finishes his declaration by saying, that his "faith, *in general*, is conformable to the Assembly's Catechism, and to the confession of faith drawn up by the elders and messengers of the congregational churches in the year 1680, and recommended to the churches by the General Court of Massachusetts."

General expressions, it must be confessed, are often very convenient, but one would hardly expect to find so many of them in a communication, that professed to be particular, and on a subject of such importance. Who could possibly tell, from his language, how many, and what particular doctrines of "the Assembly's Catechism, or the confession of the congregational churches" Mr. Codman believed and intended to preach?

After having it rung through christendom, that he had made the most *open*, *fair*, *explicit*, *full* and *particular* statement of the doctrines he intended to preach, is it not a little surprising, that we find, in his whole communication, but one doctrine *particularly* specified, viz that of the Trinity, as distinguished from Arianism and Socinianism? and that out of the multitude of different explanations of this doctrine by individual christians, and the many various ways in which it has, at different times, been decided by the authority of councils, he has not told us, in his communication, so much as which he *believes* to be correct?

But if his statement had been ever so "*full* and *particular*," if he had distinctly specified the doctrines he intended to preach; if he had precisely explained what he meant by "the doctrines of the reformation—the doctrines of the cross, the peculiar doctrines of the gospel;" if he had told us positively that his faith was "the same as that of our forefathers"—and had informed us exactly what were the particular articles of their creed—if he had pointed out which explanation of the doctrine of the Trinity he preferred, and in which of the venerable coun-

cils he reposed most confidence;—if, in short, he had particularly informed us, to which of the doctrines of the "catechism, and of the confession of the congregational churches" his faith was peculiarly conformable—and if he had made known to his society all that he made known to the council that ordained him—even if he had done all this, his society could not possibly have concluded, from this alone, what would be his conduct respecting exchanges.

For the people of Dorchester, as the Rev. Mr. Harris very justly and seasonably informed him, in his right hand of fellowship, had never advocated the modern distinctions of sect and party."*

They knew that "a difference in opinion had always existed among them, respecting some parts of the Holy Scriptures," and of this they informed him previous to his accepting their call.† Yet this difference had never produced the least difficulty among them; they had always allowed to one another the liberty of judging for themselves, and they were perfectly willing that their pastor should share with them in this liberty.

They also knew that the same difference of opinion existed among the neighboring ministers, without producing any obstruction to ministerial and christian intercourse; for at the time of Mr. Codman's ordination, we could have pointed out no less than seven clergymen in the vicinity, who were supposed to hold, and most of whom we knew professed the same sentiments as Mr. Codman, who, notwithstanding all this, had regularly been in the habit of exchanging with that part of the Boston Association, which were known to be of sentiments different from their own, with those very individuals of the Association, with whom we have been more particularly desirous to have Mr. Codman exchange, and with others of the same description in different Associations.

What possible reason then, we ask, and we would repeat it, could his society have, from the mere declaration of the sentiments he intended to preach, to suppose he designed to institute a different mode of exchanging,

* See Note 5. † See Note 9.

from what they had ever been accustomed to, and from what any clergyman in the vicinity of like sentiments with him had ever practised ?

2. Let us now see, whether by his previous intimations, and by the final stipulations of the contract, Mr. Codman gave his society any reasons to expect from him a different mode of exchanges, from what he adopted and pursued.

Mr. Codman, it appears, previous to his ordination, made known to several individuals of his society, his intention of joining the Boston Association, which he afterwards did, and of being "on the most intimate terms of friendship with them ;"* this, it also appears, removed the doubts of some few individuals in the parish, who had taken a little alarm at his communication. He also consented to receive ordination from this Association. And we would ask the candid and impartial, whether it is not an obvious and great inconsistency for a clergyman to receive ordination from, and become a member of an Association, with the most of whom he never afterwards intends to hold ministerial intercourse ?

How can these circumstances be reconciled with his subsequent conduct? he consents to be consecrated and set apart to the work of the ministry, by men, whom a few months afterward, he constantly and perseveringly affirms, he "cannot, in conscience, permit to preach in his pulpit." He does not even pretend, that the sentiments or the characters of those men have, in the slightest degree, altered during that time. How then must we account for such singular and unheard of conduct ? Has a new and strong light at once burst in upon his mind, and produced such a vast difference between *his conscience*, and the conscience of every one beside him ? or has he availed himself of a mere stratagem, to get himself settled over the society, and then come out and set them at defiance ?

But Mr. Codman assures us in his defence against the articles of complaint, that he "made use of no arts to obtain the situation he fills."† 'And so far as relates

* See Note 14. † Collection of papers, page 73.

to any of his conduct toward those ministers above alluded to, that he is as much at liberty to exchange with either of them the next Sabbath, if they were willing, and he could see it to be his duty, as he was the day he was ordained.'*

Is it then of little importance to say of one of his fathers or brethren in the ministry, even if it were only by way of opinion, that he "wondered how his people could put up with his preaching"†—of another, that "his preaching was once evangelical and salutary, but now it is far otherwise ;"—of a third, that "he was an universalist"—of a fourth, that "he forbore to preach his real sentiments, but preached smooth things, for fear of incurring the displeasure of his people ;"—and of a fifth, —that "to his peculiar sentiments must be imputed the want of vital religion among the youth in the seminary with which he is connected ;"—and of numbers of them collectively, that "they were not *apt to teach :*"—and in short, to speak of them constantly with the utmost contempt ?

How a clergyman, who has repeatedly insinuated things of this kind, can have any claims to sincerity, or to a "natural frankness of disposition," while he says, "I wish not to cast any reproach whatever on my brethren in the ministry, however they may differ from me in religious opinions," and meekly asks, "who am I that I should condemn my brethren? to our own Master we stand or fall, and at his bar we must give an account of our opinions, as well as our conduct,"‡ and "nothing can be farther from my feelings, than to speak disrespectfully of my fathers and brethren in the ministry," is to us inexplicable. Although the Rev. Mr. Codman has frequently been known to insinuate things of similar import ; yet this is "no reproach on his brethren in the ministry—and nothing can be farther from his feelings than to speak disrespectfully of them !§" Are not things of this kind, we would ask, directly calculated to diminish the influence of those gentlemen in our society ? And would they not, unavoidably, be circulated, and get to

* Collection of papers, page 78. † See Note 15. ‡ Ibidem, p. 79. § Ibidem, p. 84.

a Dr. Porter
b Mr. Gray

the ears of the people under their immediate care, and thus diminish their influence and impair their usefulness in their own societies ?

In short, are not insinuations of this kind, many of which, perhaps, might be so indefinite, that no one could tell the extent of their meaning, and which, therefore, might convey to others a much worse opinion of them, than the Rev. gentleman who offers them himself has, of a much more dangerous nature than open and direct criminations ? And do they not declare, in plain language "to his people, to their people, and indeed, to all people," that those clergymen ought not to be heard, and prevent their being heard, so far as his influence extends ?

Mr. Codman, likewise, thinks it no inconsistency, to join the Association without intending to exchange, generally, with its members.

He says, he "well knew, previous to his becoming a member of it, that there was one or more in it, that did not exchange generally with the rest." But if all its members should proceed upon this principle, with what propriety could it be called an Association ? He even pretends to have joined it to convince them of his candor and liberality ;—"that although he differed from them in his views of religion, he could associate with them with pleasure, and manifest towards them that respect and esteem, which their *characters* as men of literature and science, and their *office* as ministers of the sanctuary demand."*

What charitable construction can we possibly put upon the conduct of a minister, who comes forward in the midst of his brethren with such appearances of respect, while he seems constantly endeavouring, when apart, by such insinuations as are stated above, to bring their ministerial characters into disrepute ? In this very plea of his we find an insidious attack upon their ministerial characters. That Association, we presume, is properly and strictly, as to its object, a religious, not a scientific or literary society. To what purpose, then, was it to them,

* Collection of papers, page 75.

or his society, that he could respect *them* as men of literature and science, and *their office* as ministers of the sanctuary, while *their characters* as ministers of the sanctuary were such, in his opinion, that he could not, *conscientiously*, hold any ministerial intercourse with them?

What we have to say, respecting Mr. Codman's engagement in the contract, is intimately connected with what we have already said, respecting the declaration of his religious sentiments. These, he contends, he "was led to suppose, from the answer he received, were agreeable to his people; and that de entertained the fond expectation, that he should never afterwards experience any difficulty, on account of any line of conduct, which he conceived to be consistent with them."* A modest demand, truly, for an individual to make upon the indulgence of a whole society! Mr. Codman, it appears, expected not only to be the sole judge of what was consistent with his sentiments; but that his society must submit to it, whatever unnatural and unreasonable construction he might see fit to put upon the terms. If by saying that "he was led to suppose, from the answer he received, that his sentiments were agreeable to his people," he means, that he supposed all or most of his people to entertain those sentiments, or that they conceded to him the liberty of pursuing "any line of conduct," which he might see fit to adopt, he could have paid but very little attention to that answer. They informed him, in the very first line of it, that there was "a difference in opinion among them;"† and proceeded to observe, that such "various opinions, and discordant sentiments afford occasions for the exercise of a spirit of condescension, patience and toleration; which spirit they wished to cultivate." And so far were they, at that time, from expecting the line of conduct which he adopted and pursued, that they assured him they "had no doubt but he would use his endeavours to promote peace and friendship among the people of his charge, and to continue and confirm it among the sister churches and their pastors, and the university of which he would be an overseer." And

* Collection of papers, page 49. † See Note 9.

let it be particularly observed, that this answer "was unanimously approved at a parish meeting," and consequently expresses what were, at that time, the wishes, views and expectations, both of the church and society, respecting the future conduct of their minister. If it was disagreeable to him, or inconsistent with his sentiments, this was the proper occasion for him to make it known.

But, so far was he from objecting to their proposals, that he assured them, in his answer to his call, that "the promotion of THAT PEACE which is founded on *true Christian principle*, and not on *carnal* security, and of *that unanimity*, which is the *effect of the general reception of evangelical truth*, and *not of indifference to religious opinions*, should be the subject of his prayers, and the object of his life." That it would be his "earnest endeavour, *as far as consistent with the faithful discharge of ministerial duty*, to promote peace and friendship among the people of his charge, to do all in his power to continue and confirm it among the sister churches and their pastors, and to promote the best interest of the university."

What more than this could the society wish or expect? They never desired Mr. Codman to promote peace and unanimity among them, or their sister churches, on any other conditions, than he here assented to. They never wished him to do any thing inconsistent with the most "*faithful discharge of ministerial duty.*" It cannot, with the least shadow of reason be pretended, that he was ignorant of the wishes and expectations of his people respecting his exchanges, at the time of his ordination. And if he was indeed, as he pretends, so anxious, at that time, "*to prevent future difficulties*" in that respect, it would have been quite as easy for him to declare precisely, and in so many words, the line of conduct he meant to pursue, as to make a declaration of his belief in certain religious opinions, which he well knew, from previous circumstances, as well as from their answer to his communication, they had not been accustomed to

contend about, and which they did not wish to make the subject of contention. Would it not have been much more consistent with that "natural frankness of disposition, and the unreserved communication of thoughts and feelings,"* which Mr. Codman informs us, in his defence, are conspicuous traits in his character, to have told his people beforehand, what he constantly made for excuse against their after complaints;—"that the difference in sentiment was so great, between him and the pastors of their neighbouring churches, that he could not, consistently with the dictates of his conscience, exchange with them, while that difference continued?"† If he had sentiments of ministerial duty so entirely different from his society, and from those which all his ministerial brethren in the vicinity, even those of his own theological sentiments entertained; was he not bound by every principle of honesty and sincerity, of honor and religion, to make a full disclosure of his intentions? Who could have supposed it "*consistent with the faithful discharge of ministerial duty*," and the proper way "*to promote unanimity and friendship*," for a minister to refuse to admit into his pulpit almost every one of his brethren, with whom his people were acquainted; and what is more, to make it his constant endeavour to render those clergymen unpopular in his society, by illiberal insinuations and surmisings? And so far from trying to promote the interests of the university, to represent even its "*atmosphere as infected, by the corrupt principles of its officers;*" and to do all in his power, to prevent young men, with whom he had any influence, from pursuing their studies there? Is this, in the name of reason, of common sense, we would ask, the right way to correct errors, if any existed, either in his own, or the neighbouring societies, or at the university? Is this the character of a faithful and affectionate pastor;—of a wise, judicious, upright, intelligent and pious reformer? Let the wise, judicious, upright, intelligent and pious be the judges.

* Collection of papers, page 73. † See Note 14.

But Mr. Codman, it seems, does not think that his conduct respecting exchanges is calculated to interrupt the fellowship of his church, with the neighbouring churches.*

Let us then consult the opinion of one, universally allowed to be among the most judicious, intelligent, pious and truly liberal and charitable divines, which our own country, or even the world, can produce, upon this identical question.

What we now refer to is the answer of the venerable Dr. Lathrop of Springfield, to a recommendation of the general association of Connecticut, that their brethren in the ministry "*hold no communion, and form no exchanges in ministerial duties, with preachers who openly deny the divinity and personality of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*"

"The sentiment here condemned," says Dr. Lathrop, "is allowed to be a dangerous error." But the rules he proposes are,—1. That one minister must have "a personal knowledge" that another does openly deny a particular doctrine, before he adopts the above recommendation. 2. If he has such knowledge, he cannot be "justified in reporting it, without instituting a regular process." To pass the accusation from one to another, by report, he considers *a slander*. 3. And he refers to the injunction of an apostle, to show, that "after a brother is convicted of heresy, and even condemned by an avowal of it, there ought to be a first and second admonition to recover him, before we proceed to reject him." 4. "If we refuse to hold communion with a brother for supposed heresy or immorality, we ought to aim at the public good, and openly declare the reason of our conduct, for a warning to others, that no people may hear him, and no ministers have fellowship with him." "If we will not exchange with such a minister, it must be because we think he ought not to be treated as a minister, neither allowed to preach, nor heard if he does preach." "If we thus openly reject a minister, do we not *assume* an authority to *depose* him from office,

* Collection of papers, page 79.

and to depose him in a *summary way* without a trial?" "By this act we tell *our own people*, we tell *his* people, we tell *all* people, that they ought not to attend on his ministry." For if he is not a fit person for *our* people to hear, he is not a fit person for any people to hear." "Our act, therefore, must be a real *deposition*, as far as our influence can extend; and we mean, if we mean any thing, that our influence shall extend as far as possible." "On this ground will any minister be safe?" "For let it be reported that a minister is a *Socinian*, or an *Arian*, or *lewd*, or *intemperate*, some will believe it,—it gets into circulation—we refuse to exchange with him on account of it, and thus give it the sanction of our credence and influence, thereby practically and verbally telling his people, that they ought not to hear him any more. In compliance with our advice and example, they withdraw from his ministry. Thus the good man is, ipso facto, deposed without a trial." "This rule of conduct," he further argues, "will as well operate to the destruction of a good man, as the eviction of a bad man." And hence he concludes the rule to be "dangerous and detestable."

He thinks, moreover, 'that a minister, who would not exchange with another on the ground above stated, would act inconsistently if he exchanged with those who did exchange with him, or if he had fellowship with the church, or any members of the church which retains him, since they may all be suspected.' "Will not," says he, "such a method of procedure throw churches into confusion, and interrupt all ministerial harmony?" Thus the Rev. Dr. Lathrop.—How far the case here described is parallel to Mr. Codman's, the facts must determine.

To this authority we beg leave to add that of Mr. Codman's particular friend and advocate, the Rev. Mr. Bates, who cannot be suspected of being actuated by any other motives, in this case, than a wish to declare his real sentiments upon the subject. He gives it as his decisive opinion,—that if a clergyman refuses to exchange with a brother in the ministry, "till he is judged

and condemned by some regular ecclesiastical council, by the church with which he is connected, or some other proper tribunal," he publicly denounces that brother.*

From all this it is evident, there is a regular way of proceeding against a clergyman who has forfeited his ministerial character.

Now the Rev. Mr. Codman never informed us, that he had "*personal knowledge*" of any disqualifications in the Rev. Gentlemen, with whom we have been so desirous he should exchange ; nor do we know of his ever having attempted *to institute a regular process against any of them, or to administer brotherly reproof, or christian admonition*, on account of such disqualifications.

This we never have had, nor have we now, any objection to his doing. For we never have had the least wish that he should exchange with any one, who is not, deservedly, in good standing in the church. And if at any stage of our unhappy controversy, previous to our separation, he could have proved them to have forfeited, in any way, their ministerial and christian characters, we would most cheerfully have acquiesced in his not exchanging with them.

Thus we think it appears evident, that Mr. Codman's conduct has been unjustifiable,—inconsistent both with the spirit and the letter of his contract,—contrary to the unanimous wishes and expectations of his church and society at the time of his ordination,—aad directly calculated to destroy that "*harmony and friendly intercourse, which had for so many years subsisted among the churches in the neighborhood of his, as well as among their respective pastors ;*" and which his church, at the time of its establishment, so sacredly pledged itself to endeavour to support.

Presuming that we have justified ourselves, therefore, in opposing the conduct of the Rev. Mr. Codman, we next proceed to vindicate ourselves, with regard to the degree of our opposition, and the manner in which it has been conducted. For we have been accused of manifesting '*unreasonable opposition, and a spirit of persecution against him.*' It is to be noticed, in the first place,

* See Note 10.

that no open complaint was made to Mr. Codman till more than eleven months after his ordination, and then, not till the requests, entreaties and remonstrances, of many of those who continue with him, as well as those who have now left his society, were found ineffectual.

An address was then presented to him, subscribed by 40 of his parishioners, in which every precaution was used to avoid giving offence, or in any way hurting his feelings.* They assured him, it was "with diffidence they addressed him on a subject so important"—that they "presumed not, nor had a wish to prescribe what doctrines would be most congenial to their feelings to hear from him, but were willing he should exercise his own opinion." They only made a formal statement of a *dissatisfaction and uneasiness* which appeared to be daily increasing in his parish—they suggested what they apprehended to be the cause, and what they feared would be the consequence of it. Whether this cause was sufficient to justify the dissatisfaction and uneasiness which then existed in the parish, and the consequences that have since followed, we leave the candid and impartial to determine, from what we have said on the principal question in the controversy. And from the letter accompanying the address it must be determined, whether there was the least disposition to compel him, or in any way to hurt his feelings.

One would suppose, that an address of this kind, from so many of his parishioners, required an answer a little more definite and explicit, as to its principal object, than it received from him. His answer was, "I never can nor never shall pledge myself to exchange with any man or body of men whatever."† Certainly no one ever wished him to pledge himself, or to be under any more restraint, in that respect, than the rest of his brethren.

After about five months, no alteration having taken place respecting exchanges, the remonstrants wished to have the sense of the society taken upon the subject, and inserted an article for the purpose, in the warrant

* See Note 11. † See Note 12.

for the annual parish meeting. But so cautious was the society, lest such a measure should seem too much like compulsion, that the motion for requesting him to exchange was lost, several who were anxious to obtain the object, having declined voting, for the reason above mentioned; of which Mr. Codman was afterwards apprised by the individuals themselves.

Things continued in the same state, he still persisting to refuse exchanging, on the principle that he could not *consistently with the dictates of his conscience*, when in October, six months after the former meeting, the motion was again brought before the parish, and carried. A large committee was also appointed to communicate it to him, and obtain, if possible, a definite answer, whether he would or would not comply, and to report at an adjourned meeting.

His former answer was repeated, that he "could not pledge himself to exchange with any man or body of men whatever."

Their feelings at that moment, may easily be imagined. Conceiving the ground of their request to be of the highest importance to the future peace and prosperity of the society, as it was the fundamental principle on which it was established, and being confident that his compliance would restore their former peace and harmony—they therefore expressed their wish by vote, that "if the Rev. Mr. Codman's principles were such that he could not comply with their request, the connexion between them and him might become extinct." And as a last expedient to induce his compliance; they appointed a committee to write to those ministers with whom he had been in the habit of exchanging, and request them "not to preach in his pulpit any more, until the difficulties, which threatened the parish with destruction, were removed."

This measure has been highly censured by some, and been thought to imply a charge against the ministerial characters of those to whom it was addressed. We would therefore say, and it is the greatest pleasure to us, that we can in sincerity say, that no such charge was

intended by it. In an answer of the Rev. Mr. Bates to that letter, he complains of "unchristian and uncivil treatment." He thinks himself "injured and aggrieved"—he thinks it a "public denunciation"—an "unkind censure," &c. We can only refer to that letter* to show how much it contains of what is here complained of. We would say, however, for the honor of those gentlemen, that so far were we from complaining of any of their ministerial conduct among us, that their services, almost without any exception, were always in the highest degree acceptable to our society. And we must also say, that we were not a little surprised, to find that measure, as it respected Mr. Codman, so highly disapproved by them; since our sole object in it was, to obtain their influence in inducing him to adopt a mode of exchanging, to which we knew almost every one of them was accustomed. More especially were we surprised at the complaints of the Rev. Mr. Bates, when we found that he so decidedly and totally condemned the conduct of Mr. Codman, in this identical answer to our letter. He even represented it as in the highest degree cruel,† for if it would be cruel in the Rev. Mr. Bates to deprive the people of his particular charge, of the occasional labours of Mr. Codman, a young man with whom they had but very little acquaintance, by refusing to exchange with him, in compliance with our request, and for the reason above named, was it not infinitely more cruel in the Rev. Mr Codman, to deprive the people of his particular charge, not of the occasional labours of one, or two, or three young men, but of the labours of almost every clergyman, with whom they had any acquaintance—men of long established reputation for wisdom and integrity, for piety and virtue—men under whose instructions they had been nurtured almost from their infancy—and some of whom originated among them, and whose near relatives and friends formed a considerable part of their society,—and whose churches were in the strictest fellowship with his?

* See Note 13. † See Note 10.

We were pleased to find a different opinion of our letter expressed by the Rev. Dr. Morse, who, though he considers it "extraordinary and unprecedented," does not think it implied any charge against him, but that the contrary rather is to be inferred—that it contains sentiments of respect for him, and the other gentlemen, to whom it was addressed. And that it was "extraordinary and unprecedented," will not seem surprising, when it is considered how "extraordinary and unprecedented" was the occasion that called it forth.

This last expedient proving ineffectual, we have since had no other wish on the subject, than to have the connexion between us dissolved. Our next object therefore was, to obtain a mutual council for this purpose. A council was accordingly assembled Oct. 30th, 1811, and the several articles of complaint that had then arisen were submitted to them. On theprincipal question, viz. that relating to exchanges, the council was equally divided. It may not be amiss here to observe, that this council did not convene till more than a year after the parish meeting which voted to request Mr. Codman to exchange with the members of the Boston Association. Yet notwithstanding his repeated assurances that he would "do every thing in his power, *consistent with the dictates of his conscience*, to restore the peace and harmony of his society," no alteration took place, during that time, respecting exchanges, nor was any disposition manifested by him, to comply with the wishes of his society.

As this council was unable to decide the question, which was the original cause of the controversy, another was proposed, which convened May 12th, 1812.

The motion, that "In the opinion of this council, under existing circumstances, it is expedient that the ministerial and pastoral relation, between the Rev. Mr. Codman and the second parish in Dorchester, be dissolved," was considered by them, and decided in the negative by the vote of the moderator, "on a *full belief and strong persuasion* that he would, from that time

forward, open a more free and liberal intercourse with his ministerial brethren." He added, "if his future conduct should be the same as in time past, in this respect, I should be much disappointed and grieved." "And if I should find myself thus disappointed, I should certainly have no hesitancy in giving my vote for his dismission, if called in providence to give my voice on the question." At the end of six months, it did not appear to us that he had complied with the spirit and intention of this result. He had, indeed, enlarged the circle of his exchanges, but they did not appear to be made on "*a more free and liberal*" plan ; and most of those gentlemen, to exchange with whom we had, for more than three years, been constantly soliciting him, remained unnoticed. In short he did not appear to treat with more regard "either the *wishes* of his people, or the *sensibilities* of his ministerial brethren." The "*dissatisfaction and uneasiness*" still continued in the parish, nor were we able to determine on what principles his exchanges were made, for he had not condescended to inform us ; but had even refused a conference on the subject, with a committee of the aggrieved brethren of the church. We could not tell whether he had indeed changed his views, or whether we must conclude, that every new exchange was made in direct violation of the *dictates of his conscience*. We were without any indemnity for the past, or security for the future. He had forfeited our esteem, and we could not confide in his pretentions to do in conformity to the advice of the council, absolutely to prevent dismission, as it seemed, what he had, for so long a time, refused to do, in compliance with the unanimous wishes of his society and the most earnest entreaties of those who still remain his best friends, whose age and experience demanded more attention than they met from him, and who, at the first whisperings of uneasiness, urged him by every motive, "to quench the fire, that had but begun to kindle, and at that period might easily be extinguished."

We had every reason to believe, that he was determined to do no more, than from the exigency of his cir-

cumstances, he was absolutely obliged to do, in compliance with the wishes of his society ; and from the circumstance of his leaving the Boston Association directly after our separation from his society, we are fully confirmed in that opinion. If those few new exchanges were made from sincere and conscientious motives, why does he not continue them ?

From this circumstance we are also convinced, that his original design in joining the Association was an artifice to deceive us, as to his future conduct. Having exhausted all other means of redress, we resolved, at last, to avail ourselves of the rule pointed out by the Supreme Judicial Court, in the case of the Rev. Joseph Avery, against the inhabitants of Tyringham.

And after repeatedly requesting the Rev. Mr. Codman to ask a dismission, a parish-meeting was called, at which time he was again requested, by a committee of the parish to ask a dismission ; and on his refusal, the causes of complaint, that were presented before the first ecclesiastical council, together with others that had since arisen, were presented and read, and by a vote of the parish he was declared to be dismissed *

As the regularity of this last measure has been frequently denied, and it does not appear to be generally understood, we shall give it a more particular attention.

In the first place, we would observe, that it was not the intention of the parish to decide for themselves the merits of their cause, and thus assume the right of discharging themselves from the obligations of their contract, or to institute an unauthorised and irregular way of determining difficulties between ministers and people. But it was their object to get their cause before a civil tribunal, according to the direction, above alluded to. It is thought by many, that a minister cannot be regularly dismissed, but by an ecclesiastical council. So far is this opinion from being correct, that a council is in no case, absolutely necessary for dismissing a minister, where articles of complaint are alleged against him. For proof of this, we extract the following from the opin-

* See Note 16.

lon of Chief Justice Parsons,—3d Vol. Mass. Reports, page 181.

"It is the duty of a minister to teach by precept and example. If his example is vicious, he is worse than useless. Immoral conduct is then such misfeazance as amounts to a forfeiture of his office. I do not mean to include mere infirmities incident to human nature, and to which an habitually good man is sometimes liable. Negligence also, or a wilful and faulty neglect of public preaching, or of administering the ordinances, or of performing other usual parochial duties, is such a nonfeazance, as will cause a forfeiture of the office. In either of these cases, or in both, the town may, at a legal meetting, declare the office forfeited, assigning in their votes the causes of the forfeiture, and of their dismission. If the minister do not resist, no further question will arise: if he still claim the office, and sue for his salary, the charges made by the town, as creating a forfeiture, are questions of fact properly to be submitted to the jury. If they find the allegations true, the minister will not be considered as holding his office, after the vote of dismission. If the allegations are false, justice requires that he shall recover his salary. These allegations the jury are competent to inquire into, and on such inquiry ultimately to decide. And doubtless they would be as willing to relieve a town from the burthen of supporting a vicious and unworthy minister, as they would to aid an exemplary and faithful one, in recovering his stipulated salary."

Whether the allegations were true or false, and sufficient in our case, to create a forfeiture, was not, it is true, decided by this test. But from the Rev. Mr. Codman's declining to bring it to this test, it may be judged how much confidence he had in his cause. For it can hardly be supposed, that if he felt perfectly innocent with regard to those allegations, he would submit to such a violation of his rights; (for if those allegations were not true, the conduct of the parish was a most gross violation of his rights,)—would subject himself and friends to an ex-

pense of 10,000 dollars, at least, in buying the pews of the dissatisfied, and settling other affairs in his parish,—would suffer the loss of more than half his parishioners, and permit so deep a stain to remain on his character; when by appealing to the highest tribunal in the state, in the justice of whose decision an innocent man could most certainly confide, if he could confide in any thing, he might, with a very trifling expense, have asserted his innocence, and placed his character in the most advantageous light,—might at once, have totally and forever silenced those who were opposed to him,—might have retained his parish entire, and gone on unmolested, in the discharge of his ministerial duties, in the manner most "*consistent with the dictates of his conscience.*"

We are of opinion, that our cause, in an eminent degree, required this mode of decision. But when we found Mr. Codman determined not to resort to it, but to contend day after day for the pulpit, terms of separation were proposed on our part, which were agreed to by him and others, in behalf of his friends.*

We have now erected a house, where we intend to support public worship, and we most fervently hope and pray, that this arrangement may be the means of restoring, establishing, and perpetuating peace and friendship among us "*on true christian principles.*"

It was indeed with the greatest reluctance that we resigned our seats in the second meeting house, which is central and highly commodious for the whole parish, and for which we had contracted the strongest attachments. It was with difficulty that we consented to subject the parish to the additional expense of building a third meeting-house, and the permanent expense of supporting two ministers instead of one. But it was with the deepest regret and keenest sorrow, that we were obliged to dissolve the ties of religious communion and intercourse, with our friends who now constitute the second church and society. Many circumstances had contributed to render those ties peculiarly strong and endearing. Many of us have lived and worshipped together, in the most

* See Note 17.

perfect harmony, through the whole course of a long life, and it is painful in the extreme, to be thus separated in the evening of our days.

We are of opinion that an attachment to no one man, however deserving he might be, ought thus to have separated us. We have not now, nor have we ever had, the least wish to have a different kind of preaching, or a different mode of ministerial duty performed among us, from what they, together with ourselves, have, from our infancy been accustomed to; nor do we now entertain any sentiments toward them, which would prevent the continuance of that pleasant, social and religious intercourse,—of that "*love and harmony*," of that "*peace and friendship*," of that *charity, kindness and moderation*,' which were once our "praise in all the churches." We cannot conceive why they should now apprehend more danger from us, in case Mr. Codman had left them, than they did before he came amongst us. Or on what their opinion is grounded, that "the evils which would result, are so many and so great, that they cannot anticipate them without the most painful sensations."* Nor do we know what reason there is to suppose, that a society which had always before enjoyed the greatest share of harmony and peace among themselves, would be "divided and torn to pieces, and not be able to unite in another minister"—that a church "would despond and languish," on being separated from a pastor, under whose ministration they had enjoyed scarcely a moment of peace.

In whatever light the disinterested and impartial may be inclined to view our conduct, we are conscious to ourselves of no intention to invade the prerogatives of any; or to enlarge, to a dangerous extent, the bounds of religious freedom. We wish "*to cultivate that spirit of candor and toleration*," which is the only safeguard to free inquiry, and the surest guide to religious truth. While we refuse to be '*entangled* with any *yoke* of ecclesiastical bondage,' we wish to "stand fast in the liberty," and in that alone, "werewith Christ hath made us free."

* Collection of papers, pages 117 & 118.

Any attention, that may be bestowed on this memorial, will be received with gratitude by us and those whom we represent.

With sentiments of reverence and respect, we subscribe ourselves, in behalf of the proprietors of the New South meeting-house in Dorchester,

THOMAS CREHORE,
ABNER LORING,
EDMUND BAKER,
JOHN BUSSEY,
STEPHEN PIERCE,
BENJAMIN FULLER.

Dorchester, September 13th, 1813.

N. B. It is our wish to have our meeting-house dedicated according to the usual custom. It will be ready on Wednesday, 29th of the present month. We would likewise submit it to the association to make such arrangements respecting the time, should the day proposed not be convenient; and the assignment of the performances, as in their opinion will be most convenient and proper.

The committee will be happy, at any time, to give any information respecting the statements made in our memorial.

SEPTEMBER 13, 1813. Boston Association met at the Rev. Mr. PIERCE's, Brookline. A memorial of several individuals, who had separated from the Second Parish in Dorchester, was presented, read and committed to Rev. Dr. PORTER, Messrs. CHANNING and THACHER, with request to report thereon next Thursday se'nnight, at twelve o'clock; to which time the Association adjourned.

SEPTEMBER 23, Thursday, twelve o'clock. Met according to adjournment immediately after the Lecture, in the Theological Room, when the following report was communicated and accepted.

Report.

WHEREAS a number of individuals, who have separated from the Second Parish in Dorchester, have presented a memorial to this association, setting forth the reasons of their conduct, and asking us to join in the dedication of their new meeting-house to the service of God: therefore

Resolved, That while we approve the great object for which these memorialists profess to contend, namely, the preservation and promotion of that harmony and friendly intercourse, which have for many years subsisted amongst the churches in this neighborhood, as well as amongst their respective pastors, we do not conceive ourselves called on to pass judgment, in our official capacity, on the proceedings of either party in this affair; in which, as the memorialists candidly observe, "it is natural to suppose that much party feeling has been excited, and many things have been said and done by individuals, on both sides, which in their cooler moments, they will condemn, and which the deliberate judgment of no one can approve." But inasmuch as it appears by

the ineffectual results of two successive councils, that there was no probable method of composing these differences without a separation; and as the separation appears to have been the result of a mutual arrangement, therefore,

Voted, That we comply with the request of the memorialists.

Voted, That the Rev. Dr. LATHROP be requested to preach a sermon on the occasion, and the Rev. Mr. BRADFORD and Rev. Dr. PORTER to perform the devotional exercises.

SEPTEMBER 27. Association met at Rev. Dr. FREEMAN'S.

Voted, That Wednesday se'nnight, the 6th of October, be appointed for the purpose of dedicating the new meeting-house in Dorchester, to the service of Almighty God; and that the solemnities commence at half-past two o'clock, P.M.

Copy from the records of the association.

ATTEST, THOMAS GRAY, Scribe.

NOTE 1.

THE following note is taken from a "Communication made by the proprietors of the south meeting-house in Dorchester, to the inhabitants of the town, Nov. 25, 1806 ;" in which are stated— "the sentiments, wishes, and requests" of the proprietors, respecting the support of public worship in said meeting-house.

"As the inhabitants of Dorchester are too numerous, and part of them too remote, to assemble in one house for public worship, (about sixty families having been obliged to assemble for that purpose in other towns) and it became necessary to erect another house, for that laudable design. And though there were different opinions respecting the situation on which it ought to be placed, a number of persons united and erected one, where a large majority thought most convenient to accommodate the greatest number of inhabitants ; and it being now completed, a public instructor, or minister of the Gospel, to perform the duties there, agreeably to the rules and customs so wisely adopted by our forefathers, and so generally practised in this town, is found expedient.—And though we, whose situation and circumstances render it proper that we should assemble at the new place for public worship, rejoice at the increase and prosperity which led to this event, yet we are impressed with the *painful reflection* that it must in some measure, deprive us of the *pleasure and advantages* we have long enjoyed, from the instructions, precepts and examples of our worthy minister Mr. Harris, whose *watchful care and kind attention* merit our grateful acknowledgments ; and will always be recollected with thankfulness to him, and to the all-wise Disposer of events who has favored us with this blessing. We also regret that we must in any degree be separated from our *worthy and respected friends* in the church and congregation, with whom we have long lived in habits of intimacy and union of sentiments, in a degree far beyond what religious societies often experience.

And such regulations and arrangements in our religious concerns as shall be most convenient in their operation for the minis-

ters and people of both societies, and shall make the least division in the town will be most agreeable to us."

NOTE 2.

The following extracts are from the farewell address of the second church to the first, at the time of their separation:

"We have, in every stage of this important business, expressed our reluctance to complete separation. That it is now to take place is *a painful consideration:* but we yield to it upon principles of accordance, and with sincere desires, that we may be one in brotherly love and charity, though separated in place of public worship, in the celebration of the ordinances, and in church establishment and discipline; and we entreat you not to consider division as implying alienation; for that we would never feel." "God forbid that we should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you and your spiritual instructor, whom we bear on our hearts with the *highest esteem*, and separate from with the *deepest regret.*"

These sentiments were reciprocated by the first church as follows:

"In yielding to your request for a dissolution of your immediate relation to us, we reciprocate the *tender and affecting sentiments*, with which that application was accompanied; and assure you of our good will and cordial affection which many considerations have served to strengthen;"—"and we would be far from considering that the kind regards which these have produced, are alienated, or even diminished, by the separation which now takes place. Although circumstances have made it expedient, that you should form a new church, and your membership with us should be dissolved: yet we cannot be indifferent to your welfare," &c.

NOTE 3.

Extract from the Rev. Mr. Pierce's sermon, at the gathering of the Second Church.

"The pastors and delegates of sister churches, now convened, sincerely congratulate you on the *wonderful unanimity, zeal, and success*, with which you have conducted your affairs to this happy issue.

When you were taking the first steps toward a separation from your parent church, we were *tremblingly apprehensive* lest you should fall out by the way. But "hitherto hath the Lord helped you." We cannot but regard it as a token for good, that your civil concerns have been so amicably adjusted."

NOTE 4.

Extract from Dr. Porter's Right-hand of fellowship at the gathering of the Second Church.

"In the discharge of this pleasing duty, permit me, honored and beloved, at whose invitation we are assembled, to declare, that we consider you, as an orderly and regularly constituted church of Jesus Christ, both your Lord and ours; and tender you our brotherly affection, and the fellowship of the churches, we represent. Be assured of our taking a friendly interest in your concerns, of our prayers for your spiritual growth and prosperity, and of our disposition and readiness to maintain communion with you, in all those ways, in which distinct churches, possessing equal rights and powers, may have useful intercourse and fellowship with one another. Honored Sir,* IF YOUR HEART AND THE HEARTS OF YOUR BRETHREN, ON WHOSE BEHALF YOU ARE DEPUTED TO ACT BE AS OURS, OFFER ME YOUR HAND AND RECEIVE MINE. The meaning of this action, so well understood when used in common life, cannot be mistaken, when employed on a religious occasion like the present. It is a *ratification* of the sentiments, which have been expressed on our part; and a *token* that the same dispositions and views are entertained on yours. It is a *mutual pledge* of sincere and reciprocal esteem and affection. May it be the means of confirming and perpetuating our Christian union, love and fellowship. You will allow me, Christian brethren, to remind you of the *harmony and friendly intercourse*, which have for many years subsisted among the churches in this neighbourhood, as well as among their respective pastors; and to express a confidence, that you will not be wanting in your *disposition and endeavours*, that peace and friendship may continue and abound. In an especial manner, we trust, that you will ever be disposed to honour and love the parent church, from which you proceed, in whose bosom you were so long cherished.

It is not without having felt a degree of solicitude for the preservation of harmony and brotherly love in this town, that we have seen the progress of your affairs. We now rejoice in the contemplation of the *decency and propriety, order and charity*, with which they have been conducted and brought to their present issue."

* Stephen Badlam, Esq. chairman of the church committee.

[To the sentiments contained in the preceding note, the gentlemen *deputed to act in behalf of the church* assented, which laid the church under the most sacred obligations to act conformably to those sentiments, unless the form of expressing the fellowship of churches in this way be an idle and useless ceremony.

The Rev. Mr. Codman laid himself under similar obligations in receiving, through the Rev. Mr. Harris, *the fellowship of the churches* represented by his ordaining council. From this we extract the following note.]

NOTE 5.

"Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the churches of New-England retain this expressive ceremony as an important part of ordination solemnities: and the council convened on the present joyful occasion, have assigned to me the agreeable office of presenting you, my brother, in their name and behalf, the social hand of Christian love and ministerial help. Accept it as the *token* of our affectionate regard, the *pledge* of our fellowship, and the *promise* of our fraternal assistance, encouragement, and support. At the same time *let us be assured*, that as hand joins hand, so heart meets heart with correspondent affection, and that, *on your part*, you will cherish towards us the like attachment, and willingly discharge in our favour the like offices of brotherly kindness and charity."—

—"For many years have the inhabitants of this town been remarkable for their devout observance of the Lord's day, and regular attendance upon the duties of the sanctuary; and before the recent separation, were considered as forming one of the largest assemblies of religious worshippers, with the greatest number of communicants, of any in the vicinity. Then, and through the whole transaction of gathering a new church, and forming a second society, a *Christian spirit of love and harmony* has been evinced, of which, perhaps, there is no fairer instance in the ecclesiastical history of our country."—

—"Standing fast in one spirit, and striving together for *the faith of the gospel*, they have paid little attention to lesser matters, and words of doubtful disputation, and have been indoctrinated rather in those *important truths of religion* in which all agree, than in those *speculative topics* about which so many differ. The modern distinctions of sect and party are scarcely known, and have *never been advocated among them*. To be *disciples and followers of the Lord Jesus*, has been their only endeavour; and to be called CHRISTIANS the only appellation by which they have *aimed or desired* to be distinguished."

Note 6.

Extract from the documents respecting the gathering of the Second Church.

January 1, 1808, an ecclesiastical council was convened in Dorchester, by letters missive from several members in full communion with the church of Christ there, who had dissolved their immediate relation, for the purpose of being gathered into a second church, consisting of the following churches:

The Second Church of Christ in Boston, } Rev. John Lathrop, D.D. *Pastor*, Hon. Samuel Parkman, Esq. *Delegate.*

The First Church of Christ in Roxbury, } Rev. Eliphalet Porter, D.D. *Pastor*, Mr. John Clap, *Delegate.*

The Third Church of Christ in Roxbury, } Rev. Thomas Gray, *Pastor*, Deacon Nathaniel Weld, *Delegate.*

The Church of Christ in Brookline, } Rev. John Pierce, *Pastor*, Deacon John Robinson, *Delegate.*

The Church of Christ in Dorchester, } Rev. Thaddeus M. Harris, *Pastor*, Deac. Edward Pierce, and Deac. James Humphreys, } *Delegates.*

Note 7.

The following is a note subjoined to the Sermon and Right Hand of Fellowship, delivered at Mr. Codman's ordination.

The ordaining council consisted of the pastors of the following churches, with their delegates:

Church in Medford, Rev. David Osgood, D.D.†
Old South Church in Boston, Rev. Joseph Eckley, D.D.*† & Rev. Joshua Huntington,*
First Church in Roxbury, Rev. Eliphalet Porter, D.D.*
Congregational Church in Charlestown, Rev. Jedediah Morse, D.D.*
First Church in Dorchester, Rev. Thaddeus Mason Harris,*†
Church in Brookline, Rev. John Pierce,*
Church in Federal Street, Boston, Rev. William E. Channing,*†
First Church in Dedham, Rev. Joshua Bates,
Church in Brattle-Street, Boston, Rev. Joseph S. Buckminster,*†
Church in West-Boston, Rev. Charles Lowell,*†
Church in Milton, Rev. Samuel Gile.

* Gentlemen belonging to the Boston Association.
† Those who performed on this occasion.

Note 8.

Extracts from the Rev. Mr. Codman's communication previous to accepting his call.

"I think it my duty in the presence of a heart-searching God, and of this church, to declare my firm, unshaken faith in those doctrines, that are sometimes called the doctrines of the reformation, the doctrines of the cross, the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel."

"These doctrines, through the help of God, I intend to preach; in the faith of these doctrines I hope to live; and in the faith of these doctrines I hope to die.

"It gives me great pleasure to have it in my power to say that I BELIEVE my faith is the same with that of our venerable forefathers; and particularly with that of the former pastors of the church of Dorchester, Warham, Maverick, Mather, Burr, &c. &c.

"As *Arian* and *Socinian* errors have of late years crept into some of our churches, I think it my duty to declare to that church of Christ, of whom I may have the pastoral charge, that I believe *the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be the one living and true God;* and that my faith, in general, is conformable to the Assembly's Catechism, and to the confession of faith drawn up by the elders and messengers of the Congregational Churches in 1680, and recommended to the churches by the General Court of Massachusetts. With regard to the discipline of the church, I shall be guided by that excellent platform of church discipline drawn up at Cambridge, principally by the Rev. Richard Mather, formerly minister of Dorchester. I have thus discharged a duty, which I thought I owed to the Great Head of the church, and to you his visible members."

"I have made this communication, my dear Christian friends and brethren, to prevent any misunderstanding between us; I wish you to know the sentiments of the man you have chosen to be your pastor."

Note 9.

Extracts from the Letter of the Parish Committee, in answer to the preceding.

"Although there may be a difference in opinion, among us, respecting some parts of the Holy Scriptures; your communication is received with pleasure, and *general* satisfaction; and we venerate the principles of our forefathers, especially the pious and worthy pastors of the church of Christ in Dorchester, who have been as shining lights in the golden candlestick, and are happy to find you agree with them in sentiments."

"In our present imperfect state, various opinions and discordant sentiments will exist, and occasions occur for the exercise of a spirit

of condescension, patience, and toleration; this spirit we wish to cultivate, as we all acknowledge the same Great Head of the church, and in him are all brethren; and if we follow his example shall be all friends." "A general unanimity and spirit of accommodation, we hope, will continue among us, and should you accept our call to the important duties of a gospel minister, we have no doubt but you will use your endeavours to promote peace and friendship among the people of your charge, and to continue and confirm it among our sister churches and their pastors, and the University, of which you will be an overseer."

N. B. The preceding was unanimously approved at a parish meeting.

Note 10.

Extract from the Rev. Mr. Bates' Letter, in answer to a letter from the Parish Committee.

"I cannot comply with your request because I should thus PUBLICLY DENOUNCE a brother in the ministry; a brother, whom I love and esteem, as a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. Till he is judged and condemned by some regular ecclesiastical council, by the church with which he is connected, or some other proper tribunal, till he is thus regularly judged and condemned either of *error in doctrine*, or *immorality in practice*, of "*bringing in damnable heresies*," or "*holding the truth in unrighteousness*," and, while I have reason to believe, on the contrary, that he is *a faithful minister*, I cannot, by a voluntary compliance with your request, PUBLICLY DENOUNCE him."

P. S. "There is another reason, which did not occur to my mind, when writing the above, against complying with your request; that is, that I should thus *cruelly* deprive the people of my particular charge of the occasional labors of Mr. Codman, whose preaching with us has been peculiarly pleasing, and I hope profitable."

Note 11.

Address to Rev. Mr. Codman respecting exchanges.

REV. MR. CODMAN,

Sir, We your parishioners, with *diffidence* address you, on a subject which we think a very important one. We are fully aware that quarrels and dissentions between clergymen and their people are fraught with serious evils; they set the father against the son,

and the son against the father, and thereby all the peace and happiness of society is undermined; this we have all witnessed near at home. And to prevent as much as in our power this awful calamity, we have thought fit to submit to you, for your consideration, the following:

We do not *presume*, neither have we *a wish* to prescribe what doctrine would be most congenial to our feelings to hear from you; but are willing you should exercise your own opinion. It is however, our humble opinion, that for a clergyman to be enabled to do good, and promote the happiness and welfare of his parish, he must have the love, good will, and affections of his people, and thereby cause a punctual attendance on public worship. But the principal object we have in view, at this time, is to represent to you, that there is a dissatisfaction and uneasiness in the parish, which appears to be daily increasing, and we fear if it is not soon checked, there will be much disorder and confusion in the parish, which we sincerely deprecate. The principal cause of which, we apprehend, arises from a disappointment that many of your parishioners feel from your not making your exchanges *generally*, with those ministers who preach the public lectures in Boston, on Thursdays, and with them *indiscriminately*.

This we did expect, and this we think we have a just claim to expect from your own observations, previous to your being settled as our minister. This we humbly submit to your candid consideration, and remain your friends, well wishers, and obedient humble servants,

Signed by EDMUND BAKER,
BENJ. FULLER,
THO'S. CREHORE, and 37 others.

Dorchester, Nov. 10th, 1809.

Letter accompanying the address.

Rev. Mr. CODMAN,

Sir,—The undersigned are requested by the subscribers to the enclosed to transmit the same to you, and we by their request beg your indulgence so far as to receive the same, and investigate it, and make such use of it as you in your judgment may think most expedient. And we feel a lively hope, that you will be so directed by Divine Providence, as to pursue such measures as may have a tendency to promote our spiritual and temporal good, and that we may long dwell together in unity.

And we are authorised to say, if any one sentence of the enclosed should be thought expressed in *a harsh or indecorous* manner, or if any part of it can be so construed as to have the *least semblance of imperative language*, the same is an *error of judgment, and not of design*, and we beg you to receive it as such.

We are led to make these remarks from suggestions of some who have seen the enclosed, that you possibly might so consider it.

We remain with sentiments of the utmost friendship and esteem, your devoted servants and friends,

THOMAS CREHORE,
SAMUEL B. LYON,
EDW. W. BAXTER,
BENJ. FULLER,
STEPHEN PIERCE,
} Committ.

NOTE 12.

Extract from Mr. Codman's answer to the above.

"With regard to "*the principal object*" which you profess to have in view "*at this time*," you must give me leave to say, that I never can, nor never shall PLEDGE myself to exchange pulpits with any man or body of men whatever; and that I never did, from any observations previous to my being settled as your minister, give you any just claim to expect it."

NOTE 13.

Circular letter of the parish to several ministers.

Rev. Sir,—The singular mode pursued by the Rev. Mr. Codman, in respect to the exchanges he has made, has been a matter of serious regret with almost every member of his parish.

Why he should select gentlemen from several associations with whom he is not connected, to preach in his pulpit, to the almost total exclusion of the gentlemen who compose the association of which he is a member, and of whom the council that ordained him were principally composed, is to us so novel, that we confess we are unable to account for it. The people of Dorchester, *from time immemorial*, have been in the habit of hearing (in turn) the members of the Boston Association; and it will be a very difficult matter to persuade the second parish to relinquish that right. We therefore presume, Rev. Sir, that you will comply with the above vote, and not take any step to convulse a parish already shaken to its centre.

We subscribe ourselves, Rev. Sir, with sentiments of respect, your humble servants,

Copy signed,
THOMAS TILESTON,
BENJ. PIERCE,
THOMAS CREHORE,
} Committee.

Dorchester, Nov. 7, 1810.

Note 14.

Messrs. Withington & Tileston's deposition.

We, Samuel Withington and Thomas Tileston, both of Dorchester, testify and say—that being two of the Committee appointed to communicate to Mr. Codman the proceedings of the parish, on his communication of the 31st of October, 1808—After transacting the business of the parish, and being desirous of ascertaining Mr. Codman's ideas on church discipline generally, and wishing to quiet the fears of some members of the parish, who had been in some degree alarmed at the sentiments contained in the communication aforesaid, and had expressed doubts, whether Mr. Codman would exchange with the Boston Association of ministers generally, we introduced the conversation, by asking him, if he intended to introduce creeds and confessions into his church, by that part of his communication where he says, "with regard to the discipline of the church, I shall be guided by that excellent platform of church discipline drawn up at Cambridge, principally by the Rev. Richard Mather, formerly minister of Dorchester." He answered, No, by no means—the time for these things is past; in all these matters I shall be governed by the Association which I mean immediately to join, and with whom I mean to be upon the most intimate terms of friendship. After hearing the above explicit answer, and having much conversation with Mr. Codman as it respected his settlement, &c. the impression made on our minds was such, as induced us to believe, that all difficulties would be removed with those, who were apprehensive, that he would not exchange ministerial labors with the Boston Association of ministers; and we communicated our ideas upon this subject to some of the disaffected, who, we believe, gave up their opposition to the settlement of the Rev. Mr. Codman, in consequence of the information received from us.

We further say, that in the month of Nov. 1809, we spent several hours with the Rev. Mr. Codman, and informed him, that he would soon be presented with an address, signed by near forty persons, and that said address had been seen by us, and that we thought it a modest and handsome one, and that we were as anxious to have the exchanges take place, as the addressers were. He observed, that if he should receive an address for the above purpose, it would be nothing new to him, as he had understood for two or three months past, that some of his parish were dissatisfied at his not exchanging, and would make such a request. He then said, if it had been his intention to have exchanged with Dr. Porter, or Mr. Pierce, the next Sunday, he should not do it; where, said he, would be *my independence?* should I apply to either of the gentlemen, their answer would be—Mr. Codman, I should be happy to preach in your pulpit, but it is not your wish, you are compelled, Sir, to make this request by your society. Where then would be *my inde-*

pendence? I therefore, cannot exchange with any of the Association who differ with me in religious opinions, until they think with me, or I with them, which I hope to God will never be the case."

SAMUEL WITHINGTON,
THOMAS TILESTON.

NOTE 15.

Mr. Davenport's Deposition.

I, Ebenezer Davenport, do testify and say, that after Mr. Codman's communication containing his principles, and in which he proposed the exchange of the psalm-books, &c. a number of the people belonging to the parish told me they had some doubts, from that communication, whether Mr. Codman would exchange with such ministers as used to preach here.

On hearing this, I felt anxious to talk with Mr. Codman on the subject, and called to see him in Boston for that purpose. I found him at home and alone. After the usual compliments, he began with me, by asking how the people liked the communication made to them in his letter? I told him there were some who did not altogether like it, because they feared he would not exchange with such ministers as they were accustomed to hear. Mr. Codman appeared to be surprised, and said he should not pledge himself to exchange with any ministers. He observed, that he was unacquainted with many of the neighbouring ministers, and asked me if Mr. Harris exchanged with those to whom I referred. I told him he did, and that if he exchanged with such ministers as Mr. Harris did, there would, in my opinion, be no difficulty. Mr. Codman said he expected to exchange with Mr. Harris very often, and that they should ease one another's labours very much by exchanging; and that he did not see any difficulty respecting exchanges.

Mr. Codman's conversation gave me *satisfaction* as to that subject. I afterwards told those who were doubtful, of the conversation I had had with Mr. Codman, and of the satisfaction I felt respecting the subject of their doubts.

And I do further testify and say, that about the latter end of November, or the beginning of December, 1809—an address, intended to be sent to Mr. Codman requesting him to exchange with the ministers of the Boston Association, was handed to me by Mr. Thomas Crehore, for my signature. I did not sign it, although I approved of the address; but told him, I would go and see Mr. Codman myself, on that subject. I accordingly went to see him, and told him that if he did not exchange with some of the neighbouring ministers, with whom he had not exchanged, it was my opinion there would be a serious difficulty. Mr. Codman told me, he thought I had good preaching from those with whom he ex-

changed, and asked me, with whom I wished him to exchange? I told him I wished him to exchange with Dr. Porter in particular, as I always thought him to be a very serious good man; and also with Mr. Pierce, and Mr. Gray; and in my opinion, it would satisfy the parish. He told me, he was sorry I could not distinguish preaching better than I did, and observed that "they had good preaching in Roxbury, in Mr. Adams' day, but that he *wondered they could put up* with such preaching as they had there now." The above conversation I declare to be the truth. It gave me much uneasiness, and is one particular cause of my dissatisfaction with Mr. Codman.

EBENEZER DAVENPORT.

NOTE 16.

Proceedings at a Parish Meeting.

At a legal meeting of the second Parish in Dorchester on Tuesday, November 24, 1812.

Voted—"That whereas there has long existed in the second parish in Dorchester, a most unhappy and injurious controversy with the minister and pastor thereof, which, whether justifiable or not, in its origin and progress, must by its continuance be destructive to the principles of morality and religion, and the peace, order and prosperity of the society, and unpleasant and injurious to the feelings, comfort and happiness of the minister; and whereas there appears to be no prospect of the restoration and re-establishment of harmony, and those feelings necessary to make a minister and people happy and prosperous together, and edifying to one another—therefore voted, that Benjamin Parsons, Esq. Capt. Samuel B. Lyon and Thomas Crehore, be a committee to wait on the Rev. Mr. Codman, and in the name of the parish respectfully to request him to ask a dismission from his ministerial office and relation in the parish.

Report of the above Committee.

The committee appointed to wait on the Rev. Mr. Codman, and request him to ask a dismission, have attended that service, and beg leave to report, that Mr. Codman has refused to comply with said request, and he requests that his letter in answer to a letter from forty-seven gentlemen on that subject, may be considered as his answer to the point. B. PARSONS, *per order.*

Whereas, the Rev. John Codman has refused to comply with the reasonable wish and request of the parish for him to ask a dismission, and whereas in the opinion of the parish he has forfeited his office, therefore voted, that the ministerial and pastoral relation and connexion between him and the parish, be extinct from and after Thursday next, and that the parish will not allow him

to preach in their meeting-house, nor pay him any salary after that time."

Articles of agreement on the part of Mr. Codman and his friends.

1. Mr. Codman's friends shall give a good and sufficient bond, to purchase all the pews in the meeting-house, at the cost, viz. what they were apprised at, and what was given for choice, that shall be offered them in sixty days, by persons disaffected with Mr. Codman, to be paid for in approved notes of hand, payable in one year from the delivering of the deeds, with interest.

2. Mr. Codman shall give a bond to refund all taxes to be assessed from this date upon the persons disaffected with him, who shall certify the same in sixty days, on condition that they take no part in parish affairs so long as Mr. Codman shall be the minister of the parish.

3. A bond shall be given by responsible persons, that the parish shall forthwith pay over to those who shall certify their disaffection as aforesaid, their proportion of the ministerial fund in Dorchester, to be appropriated to the payment of a preacher, provided they shall employ one, or to constitute a permanent fund for the support of a preacher, whenever they may employ one—he not to preach in the South meeting-house.

4. The friends of Mr. Codman shall obligate themselves not to oppose, but if required, shall consent and join the disaffected in a petition to the legislature, provided the disaffected shall be desirous of obtaining an act of incorporation for another parish.

5. The second parish in Dorchester shall obligate themselves to assist the disaffected, provided they should be incorporated as another parish in obtaining from the town and church their proportion of the ministerial funds and church property.

We the undersigned, for ourselves and in behalf of the friends of Mr. Codman, agree to the foregoing articles, and pledge ourselves to do all in our power to carry them into effect.

JOHN CAPEN, Jun.
NEHEMIAH W. SKILLINGS.

I agree to the above,

JOHN CODMAN.

Dorchester, 1st Dec. 1812.

CONCLUSION.

AS we wish our defence to be as public as the censure, to which we have been subjected, we have thought it expedient to publish our memorial, with references to certain documents, which may serve to illustrate and confirm some of the statements therein made.

We think it proper to add a few words, in order to correct some mistakes that have gained circulation.

We wish it to be distinctly understood, that *a dissatisfaction with the doctrines*, which Mr. Codman has preached, or a difference in religious sentiments, has constituted no part of our complaint against him, and that we have never *presumed* to dictate to him in that particular. We refer to Note 11, for the sentiments we have invariably entertain ' on that subject.

We have never wished to abridge his ministerial prerogatives, to have him make exchanges where *any difficulties previously existed, which were not under his control*, or to *deny him all discretion* in the choice of those with whom he might exchange pulpits. But we could not withhold our protest against a system, calculated in effect to make us a *separate religious society;* cutting us off from THAT INTERCOURSE with the greater part of the Christian societies* of our own denomination, by which our *friendship and communion with them* had been preserved.

Yet no open complaint was made till gentle entreaty and persuasion—till "*the frequent applications and individual requests*"† of his best friends had proved ineffectual.

* Collection of papers, page 65. † Ibidem, p 31.

In our memorial we have confined our observations, almost entirely, to the subject of ministerial exchanges. Because, 1, We consider that of sufficient importance to justify our proceedings, and on that alone we have always been willing to rest the merits of our cause. 2, A consideration of all the distinct articles of complaint would necessarily lead us into such long discussions, as would swell to an unreasonable size, this publication, which has already increased beyond our intentions and expectations.

3, It might excite anew the spirit of contention, which we now most devoutly hope may forever subside. And, 4, In a publication of this kind, where they would not appear with the evidence, on which the truth of them depends, they would not probably be justly estimated.

In fine, those articles of complaint would not meet, from the various descriptions of readers, under whose inspection they might come, that *strict scrutiny, and impartial examination,* which a court of justice would give them.

And since we have done every thing in our power to have them referred to the highest tribunal in the state, it cannot be thought that we shrink from an investigation of them.

We are perfectly willing to leave Mr. Codman to the quiet enjoyment of all the satisfaction he can derive from the conscious rectitude of his conduct ; and refer it to the decision of the candid and impartial, whether there has existed some just cause of complaint, or whether the *proceedings* of those, who have protested against the measures of Mr. Codman, and who, for more than three years, have constituted "*the majority of the second parish*

in Dorchester,"* originated in a disposition to "*foment dissentions*," and "*spread contention far and wide :*"† Whether they have been actuated, in this affair, merely by "*a spirit of opposition, persecution, and intolerance* ;"‡ or whether it has been their object to preserve their obligations inviolate, and to retain those rights and privileges, which they have received from their fathers, that they may transmit them to their posterity.

* Collection of papers, page 30 & 31. † Ibidem, p. 43. ‡ Ibidem, p. 49 & 119.